

# On the Road

## THE RELIEF ROUTE — SR 1

Issue 21 — DELAWARE ROUTE 7 TO US ROUTE 113 — Summer 1997

### ST. GEORGES WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES UPDATE



Several members of the St. Georges Working Group pose outside the Historical Society Building in North St. Georges.

#### St. Georges Working Group Hosts Public Meeting

On April 29, 1997, the St. Georges Working Group hosted a public meeting at Gunning-Bedford to discuss the future of the US 13 St. Georges Bridge. About 150 people attended the meeting, including representatives from the Congressional Delegation, Governor Carper's office, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and DelDOT.

The meeting was conducted by Erik Dressler, representing the St. Georges Working Group. Mr. Dressler gave a brief history of the Working Group and then invited David DuPlessis from DelDOT, and Chip DiPrefontaine of the Corps to present findings from their respective studies of the St. Georges Bridge.

#### DelDOT Presents their Study

David DuPlessis from DelDOT presented findings from the *St. Georges Bridge Needs Study* which recommended that the bridge remain open as a viable option for crossing the canal. This conclusion was reached after analyzing future traffic needs for the SR 1 / US 13 corridor for the year 2020 using population, employment, and housing figures consistent with the Wilmington Area Planning Council's (WILMAPCO) Metropolitan Transportation Plan figures. Although future traffic was assessed for 2020, it was determined that without the St. Georges Bridge, SR 1 would exceed capacity by 2011. In addition, the immediate effect of closing the St. Georges Bridge would be the congestion experienced at the South St. Georges interchange once the next section of SR 1 is opened in 2000.

The study analyzed traffic for 2020 for four scenarios; three with the St. Georges Bridge open and one with the bridge closed. The scenarios assumed the construction of ramps north of the canal, south of the canal at Road 412, or both.

The study found that regardless of the combination of access ramps constructed, or the existence of the St. Georges Bridge, about 88,000 vehicles per day will cross the canal using both the US 13 and SR 1 corridors. The study showed that the best traffic flow is realized when both ramps are constructed and both bridges are open.

The study concludes that due to the negative impacts to community cohesion and general quality of life; future traffic demand from increased population, and development south of the canal; and emergency and evacuation access, the St. Georges Bridge should remain as a viable option for crossing the canal.

#### Corps Presents their Study

Chip DiPrefontaine presented the Corps' *St. Georges Bridge Technical Evaluation Report* which was mainly a cost / benefit analysis. The report used traffic data provided by DelDOT. The Corps analyzed five options and calculated costs for implementation, capital repair, operation and maintenance, inspection, and real estate. These options are:

- (1) maintenance of full, current level of service (\$35.2 million);
- (2) maintenance of four lanes with a weight restriction for trucks (\$27.6 million);
- (3) allowance for two lanes of vehicular traffic with an area for non-vehicular traffic (pedestrians and bicyclists) (\$25 million);
- (4) placement of the bridge in "caretaker" status (\$5.6 million); and
- (5) closure and removal of the bridge (\$20.6 million).

The report did not make any recommendations or conclusions. Mr. DiPrefontaine said decisions regarding the bridge rest with Assistant Secretary of the Army H. Martin Lancaster, in Washington, D.C.

#### Congressional Delegation Notes Concerns

Following the presentations, representatives from Senators Biden and Roth, Representative Castle, and Governor Carper's office heard comments, answered questions, and noted concerns. Attendees cited many reasons—including performing daily activities

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Delaware Department of  
Transportation

Anne P. Canby  
Secretary

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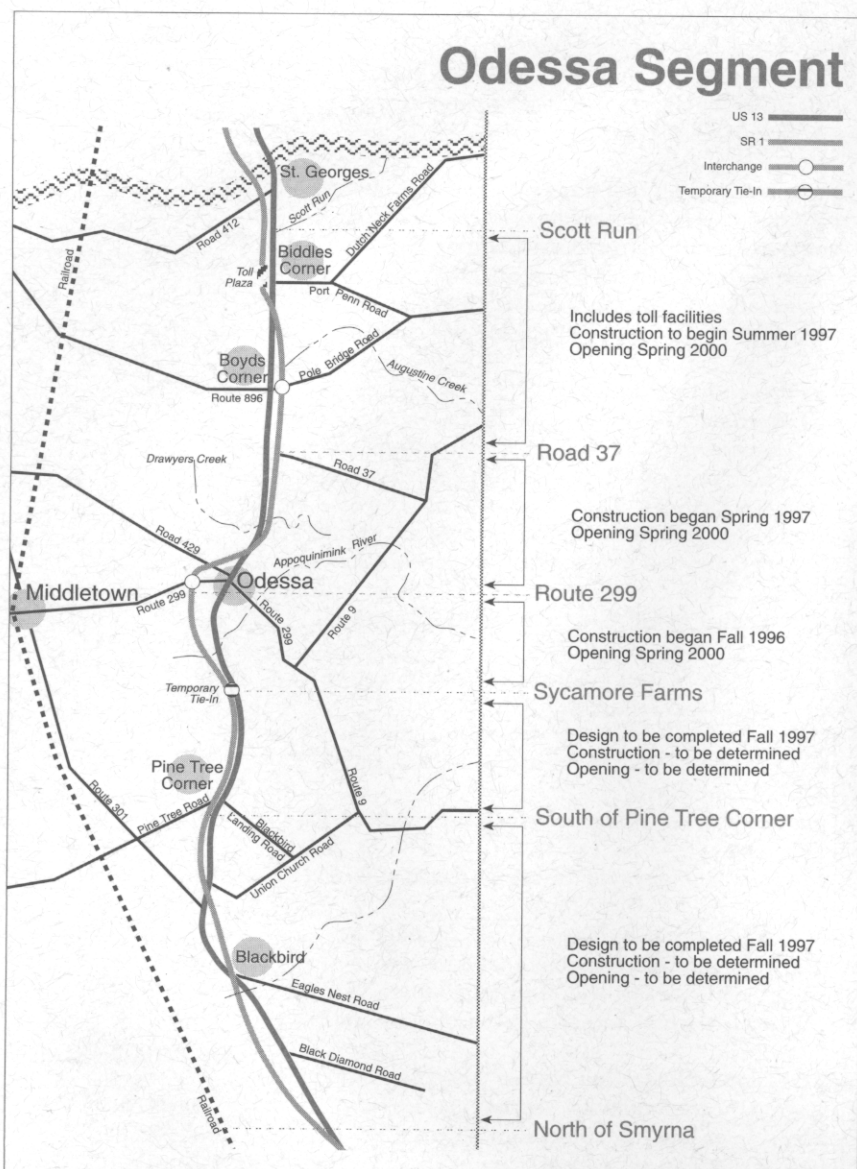
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# Mile STONES

## • ODESSA SEGMENT UPDATE

*On the Road* interviewed Tom Clements of DelDOT to get an update and overview on activities happening with the Odessa Segment of the SR 1 Project. This segment of the Relief Route has a target completion date of Spring 2000. Two smaller sections at the southernmost end of the project—Puncheon Run and Dover Air Force Base—will be completed in 2001 and 1998, respectively.

The Odessa Bypass—which extends from Sycamore Farms (south of Odessa) to the C&D Canal—will be built under three construction contracts. It will open, however, as one section of highway. Each of the three contracts will move about one million cubic yards of earth. Stockpiling excavated earth near a construction site where fill will be needed saves time and money on a construction project by eliminating time-consuming hauls to and from project locations.



Some activities that must take place before actual construction include the clearing and grubbing of the area, this is where vegetation is uprooted, and rocks and other debris are cleared away. Next, drainage work begins. The area is flattened, surveyed, and regraded according to project requirements. Where wetlands and waterways will be crossed, certain construction procedures must be followed—as outlined by state and federal environmental agencies—including providing access for construction equipment in the least disruptive way possible.

Two creeks and a river will be crossed by the Odessa Bypass of SR 1: Drawyers Creek, Augustine Creek, and Appoquinimink River.

Tom Clements does not anticipate that maintaining traffic will be especially difficult in this project, due to SR 1 being an independent alignment. "Building out of current traffic is a contractor's dream", said Tom.

Now having constructed more than half of the Relief Route, we asked Tom what he has learned from working on other sections that he can apply to the Odessa Segment. Tom emphasized the importance of trust and respect between the contractor and DelDOT, as two of the most important aspects in getting a job done well, and on time. Tom has learned never to underestimate the talent and creativity of contractors when it comes to solving unanticipated problems. Practically speaking, Tom believes a project must begin first and foremost with a good set of plans, otherwise both parties are compromised.

## • COLONIAL ARTIFACTS FOUND

Remains of a farm dating to Colonial times were found in Boyds Corner. The farm belonged to Samuel and Henrietta Mahoe, and was established in 1727. Archeologists discovered a brick foundation, and a British Penny dated 1757. Tea sets and pottery were also found. In all almost 5,000 pieces were recovered. Also discovered on the site were remnants of a campsite belonging to Nomadic Indian tribes dating from 1000 AD to 1600 AD. ■



# One PERSPECTIVE



**Tim O'Brien and Harry Griffith of Horizon Helicopters.**

*OTR: How long have you been with DelDOT?*

I've been with DelDOT for thirty years now. I served in the Navy for a while, but came back to DelDOT.

*OTR: You take great photographs, is photography also a hobby? How did you get started?*

Yes, it is also a hobby. One day my father gave me a camera, and I just became the family photographer.

*OTR: What project have you photographed that you are proudest of?*

Probably the C&D Canal Bridge, it was exciting to be a witness to a Delaware landmark as it was being built. It was interesting to monitor progress as well as the actual process of how they built it. Seeing the bridge from the air, half done, with a cantilevered span over the canal was an amazing sight.

*OTR: You certainly have a unique perspective of the state. Where is your favorite place to fly? Why?*

The Delaware beaches are one of the most beautiful features of this state. I love to fly along the coast, especially where there isn't any development. Most people don't get to see that part of the beach.

*OTR: Do you need special clearance from Dover Air Force Base to fly?*

No, we don't need special clearance. I'll either rent a helicopter from Horizon Helicopters or get Harry Van Den Heuvel from DelDOT Aeronautics. The only reason we wouldn't fly is because of the weather.

*"One Perspective" is a regular feature of On the Road. The interviews presented here provide readers with a personal, behind-the-scenes look at the planning, design and construction activities associated with SR 1, the US Route 13 Relief Route.*

*For this Summer Issue, "One Perspective" sat down with DelDOT's Graphics and Photography Specialist Tim O'Brien.*

*Tim O'Brien has had a long and interesting career with DelDOT. Tim has documented the SR 1 project in all its various stages. His unique job allows him to meet specialists from all fields—from archeology to wildlife conservation.*

*OTR: What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you in a helicopter? Have you ever had to land in an unusual place?*

Once over Wilmington, an airplane flew underneath us in quite close proximity. Also, some military A-10s have come close—they tend to fly pretty low. Another time I was flying with the State Police and they received a call for a Medi-Vac emergency. We had to land in the middle of a field to let me out, and a police car was waiting to pick me up.

*OTR: What has been the most interesting part of your career?*

Seeing things get built - from the smallest bridge to the largest highway project. Because I photograph and document projects all over the state, I get to meet all kinds of people, from architects and designers to the guy who changes the light bulbs on the C&D Canal Bridge. I get to do something different everyday. For example, today I photographed "Bike To Work Day", from Wilmington to Dover.

*OTR: How has your job changed over the years?*

Well, certainly computers add a whole new dimension. Up until very recently I was doing mostly dark room work. Now everyone wants color, which we send out, but now I can touch up and manipulate photos right here. I can scan a photo in, crop, enlarge, or reduce it to fit my document. For public workshops and meetings, it is possible to do a "before" and "after" photograph of the project even before it gets built.

*OTR: What do you dislike the most about your job?*

Filing! ■

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Tim has over 780 hours of flying time
- DelDOT has hundreds of thousands of photographs in their archives
- Photographs are taken before, during and after almost every DelDOT project
- Photographic updates of the SR 1 project are taken about once a month

## TO OUR READERS

The State of Delaware and the consultant team are committed to continuing the citizen-input process during the design and construction phases of the project. We invite you to write to us with questions or comments regarding *On the Road* or to arrange for a presentation to bring your group up to date on the Relief Route.

# For More INFORMATION

### CONTACT DelDOT

Delaware Department of Transportation  
PO Box 778  
Dover, DE 19903

- Public information: contact Michele Ackles, Manager of External Affairs, at 800-652-5600
- Design issues: contact David DuPlessis, Project Manager, at 302-739-4657
- Environmental issues: contact Joe Wutka, Assistant Director of Planning, at 302-739-3240
- Right-of-way acquisition and relocation: contact Rod Hill, Jr., Chief of Real Estate, at 302-739-2776
- Construction issues: contact Tom Clements, P.E. SR 1 Construction Engineer, at 302-734-9533

### Or CONTACT THE CONSULTANT TEAM

Kise Franks & Straw  
Toll-Free: 800-343-3084

- Project Manager: Alan Urek
- *On the Road* Newsletter: Christine Gobrial, Editor  
Jennifer Detwiler, Desk-top Publishing

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such as going to work, school, church; picking up the mail; and visiting friends and family—for keeping the bridge open, even if one lane is closed in either direction. Many, especially those that cross the canal more than once a day, felt that traveling up to an extra six miles one way to cross the canal would cost considerably in time as well as money spent in extra gas. Also, farmers commented that moving large farm equipment was much easier now that there was less traffic on the bridge. This equipment takes up two lanes and moves very slowly and would present a safety hazard crossing SR 1.

Concern over the poor maintenance of the bridge was also expressed, as residents noted debris and paint chips fall in their backyards every day.

The meeting concluded with a request that these concerns be taken back to elected officials. The representatives said they have heard the concerns and comments, and will report back to their bosses.

### Corps Makes a Decision

Early in June, the US Army Corps of Engineers announced they will be barricading the St. Georges Bridge on July 18, 1997, with demolition to occur within the next three years. The Governor, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, and the St. Georges community have all expressed disappointment in the decision and will continue efforts to persuade the Corps to rethink its decision. The St. Georges Community would like a formal hearing regarding the closure and subsequent demolition of the bridge, but so far the Corps has declined to hold a hearing.

### St. Georges Working Group Plans March

The Working Group will sponsor a walk across the St. Georges Bridge July 17, 1997. The walk will begin at the foot of the bridge in North St. Georges on the southbound side (by the antique station), at 7:30 PM. If you have questions please call Christine Gobrial at 1-800-343-3084. ■